



EYO

Etowah Youth Orchestras

Michael R. Gagliardo, Music Director & Conductor

Bryce Anderson & Deborah Boos, Assistant Conductors

“Where will the music take you?”

2023-2024

Policy

Handbook

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July 10, 2023

Welcome to the 2023-2024 season of the Etowah Youth Orchestras! We are pleased that you will be a part of the EYO family for the upcoming season, and are certain that your experiences with the EYO will be both exciting and educational.

The Policy Handbook of the EYO is designed to address all matters pertaining to student involvement in the organization. Inside you will find information regarding attendance, concert attire, auditions, rehearsal etiquette, and other general information about the EYO ensembles. In addition to the Handbook, you will also receive a copy of the 2023-2024 Season Calendar. The Calendar can also be accessed via the shared links for iCal and Google formats. The Season Calendar contains dates for all EYO events for the upcoming season, including rehearsals and performances.

Please take an opportunity to carefully review this handbook and its contents, and feel free to ask any questions regarding the information contained herein. Our goal is to provide the best musical and educational experiences possible for all members of the EYO organization. We want to make sure that your experience is a positive one, and that all students who are a part of our program have the same great shared experiences.

We strongly believe that good communication is one of the keys to the success of our program. We are available to assist you at any time regarding matters of the EYO. Please feel free to contact us at the email addresses listed below at any time and we will be happy to answer any questions you might have – this is the best way to reach us.

Again, welcome to the EYO family for the 2023-2024 season. We look forward to an outstanding year of great music!

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Mailing address - Etowah Youth Orchestras, The Music Center at Temple Beth Israel
P.O. Box 1507, Gadsden, AL 35902

Physical address - 761 Chestnut Street, Gadsden, AL 35901

Parking at the Music Center

Monday-Friday, 8 AM-5 PM
Please park in the parking lot of the Etowah County Courthouse, 800 Forrest Avenue.

Monday-Friday, after 5 PM, and Saturday-Sunday
You may park in the lots of Daniel King, Thomas King, Vincent Pentecost, and Dr. Kenneth Smith, as well as the Etowah County Courthouse lot.

EYO Calendar Policy

Each season the EYO publishes the annual Season Calendar as a companion document to the annual Policy Handbook. While every attempt is made to ensure that this is a complete calendar with all rehearsals, performances and events for the entire season, there are always circumstances that result in the need for adjustments to the calendar.

The EYO is happy to share this calendar as needed with school music instructors, athletic team coaches, and organization and club sponsors, to assist in making them aware of your commitment to the EYO and the scheduled performances and activities of the organization, thus avoiding any potential conflicts.

Weather Cancellation Policy

The EYO follows the Etowah County School System in determining whether to postpone or cancel EYO events due to weather conditions. Please use the Etowah County Schools' information as a basis for these situations. The EYO will also use our social media outlets to release information regarding schedule changes.

In accordance with the Etowah County School System, if:

School is cancelled for the entire day - all EYO events for that calendar day are cancelled.

School is on a delayed start - all EYO events for that day will take place as normally scheduled, beginning at the time that school starts.

School is released early – all EYO events for the day are cancelled, starting at the announced release time.

After-school events are cancelled - all EYO events from 3 PM on for that calendar day are cancelled.

For days when school is not in session but there are EYO activities on the calendar, decisions regarding delays or cancellations will be made by the EYO staff. All communication regarding postponement or cancellation of EYO rehearsals and other events will be made no less than 2 hours prior to the start of the rehearsal/event.

Hours of operation – The Music Center at Temple Beth Israel

The Music Center at Temple Beth Israel maintains the following hours of operation:

Monday - 1-4:00 PM; 6-8:45 PM

Tuesday - 9 AM-12 PM; 1-4:00 PM; 6-8:45 PM

Wednesday - 3-4:00 PM & by appointment

Thursday - 3-4:00 PM; 6-8:15 PM; & by appointment

Friday – by appointment

The Music Center is closed on Saturday and Sunday.

The Music Center is closed on the following holidays:

New Year's Day, Martin Luther King Jr. Day, Presidents' Day, Good Friday, Memorial Day, Juneteenth, Independence Day, Labor Day, Columbus Day, Veteran's Day, Thanksgiving, Christmas Eve, Christmas Day, New Year's Eve

Other closure dates for The Music Center can be found in the EYO calendar.

Please note that there will be some days where the Music Center will be closed (Martin Luther King Jr. Day, Columbus Day) but evening rehearsals will still be held!

The EYO on Social Media

The EYO maintains an active online and social media presence. These outlets are FREQUENTLY used to notify members and parents of upcoming events, changes in schedules, rehearsal cancellations due to weather or other emergencies, and many other important matters.

The EYO's website has a great deal of information regarding the program –
www.myeyo.org

In addition, the EYO maintains multiple Facebook pages –

Etowah Youth Orchestras –

<https://www.facebook.com/EtowahYouthOrchestras>

The Music Center at Temple Beth Israel –

<https://www.facebook.com/TheMusicCenterAtTempleBethIsrael>

The EYO also maintains separate Facebook pages for its members and parents. If you have not already been added to these groups, please ask to join the following:

EYSO & EYPO members – EYO Youth Symphony & Youth Philharmonic

All EYO parents – Etowah Youth Orchestras Parents Group

ESS members & parents – EYO String Sinfonia

The EYO Twitter account is @EYO1991

The EYO Instagram account is etowahyouthorchestras

The EYO YouTube channel is Etowah Youth Orchestras

The MOST important social media device that the EYO uses is the Remind.com system for notifications! The EYO regularly uses this system to notify parents and students of rehearsal changes and cancellations, upcoming events, etc. Please go to Remind.com and sign BOTH the student and the parents up for the appropriate ensembles:

Etowah Youth Symphony Orchestra – remind.com/join/etowahyso

Etowah Youth Philharmonic Orchestra – remind.com/join/etowahypo

Etowah String Sinfonia – remind.com/join/etowahss

If your student is a member of multiple ensembles, please be sure to sign both the student and the parents up for BOTH ensembles, as notifications are often sent to the different groups.

The EYO encourages all members and parents to follow these websites, especially the EYO and Music Center Facebook pages, the group Facebook pages, and Remind.com.

Code of Conduct

The Etowah Youth Orchestras believes that all members of the organization are ambassadors of the EYO, as well as their schools, their communities, and all communities represented by the organization. The Etowah Youth Orchestras maintains a reputation throughout the United States as one of the finest organizations of its kind, not only based on performance standards, but also on the character of its members.

Membership in the EYO is a privilege and should be treated in this manner always. EYO members are ALWAYS representing the organization, whether at EYO functions or in the public. The actions of each member represent the organization as a whole, and all students are reminded that their actions can impact all members of the organization.

Students should consider their schools' codes of conduct to apply to the activities of the EYO. All disciplinary matters for Etowah Youth Orchestras members will be handled on a case-by-case basis by the EYO staff and may include consultation with the EYO's senior student leadership, the staff of the Gadsden Cultural Arts Foundation, and the Boards of Directors of the EYO and the GCAF.

Goals & Expectations

The mission of the Etowah Youth Orchestras is to provide the students of Northeast Alabama with major musical and educational experiences through training, development, and performance.

The EYO is an Equal Opportunity Organization. The EYO does not and shall not discriminate based on race, color, religion (creed), gender, gender expression, age, national origin (ancestry), disability, or sexual orientation in any of its activities or operations. We are committed to providing an inclusive and welcoming environment for all members of our organization.

To fulfill our mission, the EYO has the following expectations of all student participants.

Open Rehearsal Policy

All regular rehearsals of the ensembles of the Etowah Youth Orchestras are open rehearsals, meaning that parents may observe these rehearsals at any time. Dress rehearsals are closed rehearsals.

For concerts that are ticketed events, all parents, siblings, and other family members must have a ticket for the performance to be admitted.

Attendance

While the Etowah Youth Orchestras is an after-school extracurricular program, its ensembles rely upon the commitments of each individual member to assure the highest level of preparation and performance at all EYO activities. This in mind, the EYO has established the following attendance policies for its ensembles.

Rehearsal Attendance Policies - Excused Absences

1. **Regular weekly ensemble rehearsals** - An excused absence constitutes an absence where the ensemble's conductor has received advanced notification of the absence. Notification may occur by phone, email, or in writing, and must occur at least two hours prior to the start of the rehearsal to be considered excused. While each absence will be considered on a case-by-case basis, excused absences are generally granted for situations such as illness, family emergency, or school-sanctioned events. Please refer to the information regarding excessive absences as it relates to the total number of excused absences allowed during the season.
2. **Dress rehearsals** - Excused absences must include some form of documentation, i.e., doctor's written excuse, funeral notice, etc. Students who are granted an excused absence from a dress rehearsal will also receive an excused absence from the subsequent performance, with no resulting consequences.

Rehearsal Attendance Policies - Unexcused Absences

1. **Regular weekly ensemble rehearsals** - An unexcused absence constitutes an absence where the ensemble's conductor has not received advanced notification of the absence, or where the reason for the absence is not deemed suitable to consider it excused. Examples may be, but are not limited to, attending non-school-related concerts or events, poor time-management regarding planning for homework and projects, or transportation issues.
2. **Dress rehearsals** - While the criteria for determining whether an absence is excused or unexcused will remain consistent with that of regular rehearsals, the staff of the EYO will make the final determination.

Tardiness

Students are expected to arrive at the Music Center no less than 10 minutes prior to the start of their designated rehearsal time and are expected to be in their seats no less than 5 minutes prior to the start of rehearsal. Excessive and habitual tardiness will be addressed by the conductors of the students' ensembles as needed.

School-Sanctioned Events

For the purposes of its attendance policies, the Etowah Youth Orchestras defines school-sanctioned events as:

1. Events that are directly related to an academic course in which a student is enrolled, and that an absence from may have a direct impact on the student's grade for that course.

2. Events that are directly related to a club or organization that is DIRECTLY sponsored by the student's school, and that an absence from may result in loss of membership or status in the club or organization. Examples include athletic teams, Beta Club, National Honor Society, etc.

It should be noted that while school-sanctioned events are generally considered to be acceptable for excused absences, the number of school-sanctioned events in relation to clubs and organizations should be kept to a minimum. The EYO ensemble conductors request that students involved with school-sanctioned clubs and organizations communicate directly with the sponsors of these organizations to make sure that those sponsors are aware of the students' commitments to the EYO so that a balance can be achieved that is acceptable to both the EYO and the club or organization. Ensemble conductors will address excessive absences from EYO commitments.

As supporters and proponents of all school music programs, it goes without saying that the EYO encourages participation in school-based band and orchestra trips and considers these to be school sanctioned-events. However, as many of these trips are not MANDATORY and do not impact a student's grade or status in the program, we ask that the EYO calendar be referenced prior to committing to a school band or orchestra trip to avoid any conflicts with EYO performances and dress rehearsals.

Please note that, while the EYO encourages its members to participate in activities such as Honor Bands and other music festivals, **these events are NOT considered school-sanctioned events UNLESS there is a direct correlation between the student's participation in these events and a grade received in a class in which the student is enrolled. Please make sure that, when scheduling participation in these events, there is no conflict with EYO activities.**

Also, please note that college and university preview days, while important, are not considered school-sanctioned events, and should be cleared by the EYO staff when a conflict arises between one of these events and an EYO rehearsal or performance.

Extracurricular Activities

The EYO encourages its members to participate in extracurricular activities, including school, church, sports, and community activities and organizations. The EYO staff believes that participation in these activities as well as the EYO creates well-rounded students who will be the future leaders in their communities. When making various commitments, please be mindful of the commitment made to the EYO for both rehearsals and performances. **If a conflict arises, please notify the EYO staff immediately so that it can be addressed and resolved quickly and in the best possible fashion for all individuals and organizations involved.**

ATTENDANCE POLICY – REGULAR REHEARSALS

Students will be allowed three unexcused absences PER ENSEMBLE during the concert season. For each unexcused absence more than three, the student will move down one chair in his or her section per absence. When the student reaches the last chair in the section and can thus no longer be moved down, a subsequent unexcused absence will result in the student's termination from the ensemble.

Excessive Absences

The EYO's attendance policies for regular rehearsals detail the procedures in relation to unexcused absences. However, it should be noted that while these absences are detrimental to the overall performance of the ensemble, excessive **excused** absences can also affect an ensemble's ability to sufficiently prepare for performances. The staff of the EYO understands that the members of the program have multiple commitments, and that scheduling can sometimes be a challenge. However, each ensemble relies on EVERY member working together to present the best possible performances and maintain the best possible rehearsal environment. The EYO has established the following policy for excessive absences, which applies to all the EYO ensembles.

Following a sixth absence, either excused or unexcused, from the rehearsals of an ensemble, the ensemble director will request a conference with the student and parents to review the EYO's attendance policies and to discuss any issues that exist with rehearsal attendance. At that time, the student will begin a probationary period, specific to attendance, that will be determined in discussion with the director, the student, and the parents. Following the successful completion of this probationary period, the student's status shall return to member in good standing, with all benefits as such.

If during the probationary period the student violates the terms set forth in the conference with the director and parents, the ensemble director may take immediate disciplinary action, including but not limited to loss of chair placement, loss of member in good standing privileges, suspension from performances, or termination from the ensemble.

A student reaching ten combined excused and unexcused absences for any ensemble during the season will be expelled from that ensemble.

ATTENDANCE POLICY – DRESS REHEARSALS AND PERFORMANCES

Dress rehearsals are an important part of the performance experience and are crucial from both an artistic and an educational standpoint. As we believe that all students should be treated equally regarding the matter of rehearsal attendance, the EYO has mandated the following dress rehearsal policy:

1. Attendance at dress rehearsals is mandatory.
2. **A student who does not attend a dress rehearsal will not be allowed to participate in the performance.**
3. Students are expected to be in attendance for the entire rehearsal, as presented on the annual rehearsal calendar.

Students who receive an unexcused absence from a dress rehearsal will not be allowed to participate in the subsequent performance and will be subject to other disciplinary action, ranging from loss of chair placement to termination from the ensemble. Determinations regarding additional disciplinary action are the sole discretion of the EYO staff.

An unexcused absence from a performance is grounds for immediate termination.

A student who attends a dress rehearsal but then is unable to attend the subsequent performance may be considered excused only with proper documentation, consultation with the student and parents, and notice prior to the beginning of the performance.

If a student is absent from a dress rehearsal, proper documentation must be provided within 48 hours of the starting time of the rehearsal for the absence to be reviewed for consideration as an excused absence. If documentation is not provided within the timeframe, the absence will automatically become an unexcused absence.

All performances are mandatory for all ensemble members. If a student becomes aware of a conflict with a scheduled performance, he or she must contact the ensemble conductor IMMEDIATELY so that the situation may be properly addressed.

Dress Rehearsal Pass-Off Policy

From time-to-time unavoidable scheduling conflicts occur that deem it impossible for a student to be in attendance for a dress rehearsal, even though the student, ensemble conductor, and other parties involved have made every effort to rectify the situation. When this occurs, the ensemble conductor MAY offer the student the opportunity to “pass-off” the music for the performance in a one-on-one setting, with the pass-off audition serving in place of the student’s attendance at the dress rehearsal.

The following stipulations apply to pass-off auditions:

1. **Pass-off auditions may ONLY be offered at the discretion of the ensemble conductor.**
2. ***Pass-off auditions WILL ONLY BE OFFERED if the conflict in question is a SCHOOL-SANCTIONED EVENT. PLEASE NOTE – ACT AND SAT EXAMINATIONS DO NOT QUALIFY AS SCHOOL-SANCTIONED EVENTS!!!***

3. **To be considered eligible for a potential pass-off audition, notification of the conflict MUST BE RECEIVED IN WRITING FROM THE STUDENT'S TEACHER/SPONSOR ONE MONTH IN ADVANCE OF THE DATE OF THE DRESS REHEARSAL.**
4. Contact will be made with the student's teacher/sponsor by the conductor to determine if there is a possible resolution to the scheduling conflict.
5. Pass-off auditions will take place no more than five days prior to the dress rehearsal date and will consist of all music for the concert in question.

Rehearsal etiquette

To make the most of the limited amount of rehearsal time that each ensemble has in preparation for performances, the EYO has established the following guidelines for rehearsal etiquette for its ensembles.

- Students are not allowed to have cell phones visible or audible during EYO rehearsals.
- iPads, tablets, laptops, and other electronic devices are not to be used during EYO rehearsals, unless they are being used SOLELY in place of hard copies of print music (please don't abuse this privilege!)
- There is no food or drink, except for water, allowed in the rehearsal hall.
- Bring your instrument and all accessories, your folder and music, and a pencil or other means of making rehearsal markings to all rehearsals.
- All ensemble members should be present 10 minutes prior to the start of rehearsal and should be seated and ready to tune 5 minutes prior to the start of rehearsal.
- Hard copies of print music are to be marked WITH PENCIL ONLY!
- You may bring your homework with you to rehearsal, but you must be prepared to play when it is your turn. Excessive problems with this matter will cause this privilege to be revoked.
- Please be respectful of all other ensemble members and all guests.
- Stop when the conductor stops and keep all noise to a minimum.
- Play only when it is your turn to play, as instructed by the conductor. Practice at home!
- The upstairs balcony area of the Music Center is closed and is off limits – please do not enter the balcony area at any time!
- As a courtesy to EYO staff members, please make sure to have your transportation arranged so that you can be on your way home by 15 minutes after the conclusion of rehearsal!

Individual Practice

The EYO staff relies heavily on the ensemble members to maintain and retain what is accomplished in weekly rehearsals by making a sufficient investment in individual practice each week. While the EYO understands that students maintain extremely busy schedules, the success of each ensemble is heavily weighted in the investment made by each individual member, and each member relies on the others to play their part in the team effort that is successful musical performance on an ensemble level. Lack of individual practice will affect the ability of each ensemble to perform at the highest level and may influence the repertoire that each ensemble is able to perform.

Students are expected to be well prepared for each performance. Ensemble conductors may, in the interest of the performance and the presentation of the entire ensemble, alter seating positions or reassign parts as they see necessary.

The ensemble conductors will determine all bowings for EYO ensembles. Ensemble conductors may opt to request input on bowings from the teachers of the students who are serving in leadership roles in the ensembles, or from the faculty of the Gadsden Community School for the Arts. All decisions regarding bowings are made final by the ensemble conductors, and all students are expected to follow the bowings as issued.

Private instrumental music lessons

While not required to participate in the ensembles of the Etowah Youth Orchestras, it is **HIGHLY RECOMMENDED** that all ensemble members study privately with a trained instructor on their instrument. Private instruction is essential to the foundations of good musical performance and is crucial in developing proper techniques and performance habits that significantly strengthen each player's ability as both an individual and an ensemble member. The EYO can recommend instructors on every instrument for each student, based on current levels of ability. In addition, the EYO works with the Gadsden Community School for the Arts, located at the Hardin Center for Cultural Arts, and its music faculty.

School Music Programs

School music programs are the backbone of the Youth Orchestra program. If it were not for the existing school music programs and their instructors, the EYO would not be able to perform at its current level. Additionally, all the members of the EYO Staff are products of school music programs.

All members of the EYO ensembles should be active participants in their schools' music programs, enrolling in the music courses for their school ensembles and participating in all required after-school activities of the ensembles.

The EYO staff understands that sometimes conflicts with course scheduling may make it difficult to schedule ensemble classes. When this is the case, the EYO recommends that students meet with their school ensemble directors to work out a scheduling solution that is agreeable to both parties and falls within the guidelines of school policy. The EYO staff is happy to assist students with this process.

Supplies & Materials

Instruments

All students are expected to provide their own instruments for their respective ensembles for ALL rehearsals and performances. Exceptions are as follows:

- Percussionists in the Etowah Youth Symphony Orchestra and the Etowah Youth Philharmonic Orchestra will be allowed the use of the EYO's percussion equipment **BUT SHOULD PROVIDE THEIR OWN STICK BAGS, STICKS AND MALLETS AS NEEDED (exceptions are large mallets, such as bass drum, gong, chimes, etc.)!** Percussionists opting to use their own equipment should make sure that any equipment brought in for rehearsals or performances is clearly marked with their names and some other identifying label. **NO EYO PERCUSSION EQUIPMENT IS TO LEAVE THE MUSIC CENTER WITH AN INDIVIDUAL STUDENT WITHOUT THE CONSENT OF THE MUSIC DIRECTOR!**
- Pianists in the Etowah Youth Symphony Orchestra and the Etowah Youth Philharmonic Orchestra will be allowed the use of the EYO's pianos and electric keyboards, including all accessories. **NONE OF THIS EQUIPMENT WILL BE CHECKED OUT TO EYO STUDENTS.** Students wishing to use their own keyboards for rehearsal or performance purposes may do so, but will be responsible for the set-up, tear-down, and moving of their own equipment. Student equipment should be clearly labeled with the name of the student and other identifying information.
- Double bass players in all EYO ensembles will be allowed the use of the EYO double basses for rehearsals and performances. Based on need and availability, double basses may be checked out to EYO double bass players to use at home for practice purposes. Double bass players using their own instruments or school instruments will be responsible for the transportation of these instruments.
- The EYO has a limited number of violins, violas, and cellos available for use by members of the EYO program. It is expected that the members of the string sections of the ensembles (except for double bass players, as noted above) will provide their own instruments for use in the ensembles – either their personal instrument, or an instrument rented by a music supplier or loaned by a school program. Requests for the use of the EYO string instruments must be approved by the Music Director and will be granted based on instrument availability.

- Students participating in the EYO's Double Reed Program are eligible for the use of EYO instruments that qualify for the program. DRP students will be allowed to check out an instrument for use in the program based on availability and acceptance into the program by audition.
- Other specialty instruments ('A' clarinets, piccolo, bass clarinet, etc.) will be checked out at the discretion of the Music Director.

A note about individual instruments

As students progress musically, the quality of their instruments should progress as well. Many students begin their training on student-level instruments that are provided on loan from a school music program or are rental instruments through a local music supplier. For beginning-level instruction, these instruments are more than sufficient for early musical training. However, when students reach the ensembles of the EYO program, the level of their individual instruments should match the level of performance of the ensemble. While the EYO does not require specific brands or models of instruments for admission to its ensembles, the ensembles' directors may encourage students to investigate the possibility of upgrading to an instrument that is more suitable for the ensemble, providing uniformity in sound quality and appearance on stage. The EYO staff is happy to assist students and parents in obtaining an instrument that is best suited for both the students' individual needs and the needs of the ensemble.

Piano on the Rehearsal Hall stage

The Hyundai grand piano on the stage in the Rehearsal Hall is NOT the property of the Etowah Youth Orchestras - it is the property of the Gadsden Music Club. The piano has been graciously placed in the Music Center by the Gadsden Music Club and may be used by the Etowah Youth Orchestras when not in use for Music Club purposes.

As the piano is not the property of the EYO, only the following individuals may play this piano:

- Any member of the Gadsden Music Club.
- Students of members of the Gadsden Music Club, when approved in advance, or for programs or activities of the Gadsden Music Club.
- Members of the EYO staff.
- Any member of the EYO who is the DESIGNATED pianist for an EYO ensemble (including EYSO, EYPO, ESS, Red Brick Collective ensembles, Coosa River Diary, and the Rock & Roll Christmas Front Ensemble).
- Any member of the EYO who is ASSIGNED a piano part for a selection being rehearsed or performed by an EYO ensemble.
- Gadsden Music Club and EYO guest artists and speakers.
- Accompanists for Gadsden Music Club/EYO students, approved in advance.

Instrument supplies

In addition to their instruments, EYO members are expected to supply the following for their instruments:

All instruments – all necessary maintenance and cleaning supplies
Violinists and violists – extra strings, mutes, rosin, shoulder rests
Cellists and double bassists – extra strings, mutes, rosin, endpin anchors
Woodwinds – extra reeds, cleaning rod (flutes)
Brass – slide grease, valve/slide oil, appropriate mutes as needed

The EYO will provide replacement strings, mutes, rosin, shoulder rests, and rock stops, as well as basic maintenance, **for EYO-owned string instruments ONLY!**

Howard Core Company

The EYO maintains an excellent relationship with Howard Core Company in Anniston, one of the leading wholesalers of string instruments and string instrument supplies in the United States. Because of this relationship, the EYO is happy to assist string players who are members of the EYO ensembles in obtaining instruments and supplies. **However, since Howard Core Company is a wholesale operation and does not have a retail division, all contact must be executed through the EYO offices.** If you need a string instrument or supplies for a string instrument, please contact the EYO offices, and a member of the staff will assist you.

PLEASE NOTE - this is a privilege that is reserved **ONLY FOR MEMBERS OF THE ETOWAH YOUTH ORCHESTRAS!** Please do not extend this offer or information regarding this program to anyone who is not a member of the EYO – **IT WILL NOT BE HONORED!**

Folders

At the beginning of each season all EYO ensemble members will be issued a music folder for their respective ensembles. The folder will contain the music to be performed throughout the course of the season. The conductors of the ensembles may add additional music at any time. These folders are the property of the Etowah Youth Orchestras and are to be returned **IMMEDIATELY** after the season or upon a student's withdrawal from an ensemble. **All music issued to students MUST be returned in the folder as well.**

The EYO charges a \$150.00 folder/music replacement fee for any folders and/or music not returned at the completion of the season or at the termination of a student's membership in an ensemble. In addition, folders are expected to be maintained by the students throughout the season. Any folder that is returned to the EYO that displays damage beyond what can be considered normal wear will be susceptible to the replacement fee.

We encourage students to load their music onto their personal iPads or tablets, to be used in rehearsal and performance settings. If you wish to do so, please know that it does not relieve you of the burden of upkeep for your folder and print music, as noted above. Also, should you choose to do so, please make sure that your device is fully charged, fully accessible, and present at all rehearsals and performances, and that you have a way to make and save rehearsal markings on the digital copies of your music. The EYO will provide a music stand in good working order – you are responsible for ensuring the safety and security of your device.

Concert Attire

Concert attire is specified below by ensemble. Students are expected to have the appropriate attire for each concert. Students who are not appropriately dressed for a performance will not be allowed to participate in the performance. A student who does not perform on a concert because of improper performance attire may be considered unexcused for that performance.

In case of doubt regarding the appropriateness of attire for a performance, it is best to consult with the ensemble conductor well in advance of the concert for a determination as to whether the selected attire meets the requirements for the concert dress code.

For all other functions of the Etowah Youth Orchestras students may dress casually but appropriately. A rule of thumb – if it would not be acceptable to wear at school, it should not be worn to EYO activities.

Etowah String Sinfonia

Gentlemen – Black dress pants; black long-sleeve dress shirt; black socks; solid black belt and dress shoes.

Ladies – Black dress (capped sleeves or longer with floor-length skirt); OR black skirt (floor-length) and black dress shirt; OR black dress pants and black dress shirt. Black shoes - all shoes must be solid black and closed-toe.

Etowah Youth Symphony Orchestra & Etowah Youth Philharmonic Orchestra

Ladies – BLACK floor-length concert dress OR black pantsuit. Previously purchased concert attire of comparable style, such as those used for other musical organizations (including EYO attire purchased in previous seasons) may be approved by the ensemble conductor. All shoes must be solid black and closed toe.

Gentlemen – Black suit to include black pants and jacket, black shirt, black tie, black shoes and socks, black suspenders or belt

For the 2023-2024 season, Gadson Men’s Fashion will be assisting the gentlemen of the EYO with their concert attire needs. More information regarding concert attire for both ladies and gentlemen will be available by September 1 at the latest.

A note about concert attire

The EYO is an organization that values and embraces diversity and inclusion. We understand that clothes are an outward extension of a person's inner conception of self. While the traditional concert attire is a part of the overall performance, we do not wish to place any student in an uncomfortable position in this regard. If there are concerns about the EYO's concert attire, please do not hesitate to schedule a private conference with the EYO Music Director and the student's ensemble conductor to create a solution that is welcoming to all involved.

A note about individual expression and stage presence

The EYO loves individual expression – it's what makes you, "you!" Individual expression and artistic creativity are what the EYO is all about. However, there are times when we ask you to consider your role in the ensemble as a whole, specifically in relation to the formal concert performances of the EYO ensembles.

While in most instances these things are NOT an issue, please note that when it comes to formal concert performances where the EYO ensembles are striving to present a professional atmosphere on stage for both the ensemble members and the audience, things such as brightly-colored hair, excessive or unusual make-up, and excessive jewelry should be carefully considered.

In short, we want you to be you – we just ask that you be mindful of those around you when it comes time to present these performances!

Auditions & Seating

The Etowah Youth Orchestras holds various types of auditions each season for the members of its ensembles.

Acceptance Auditions & Promotional Auditions

Acceptance auditions are the auditions that prospective EYO members take to be considered for membership in the EYO ensembles. Acceptance auditions are held annually in May, with additional acceptance auditions in June and July as needed. Additional acceptance audition dates may also be scheduled throughout the year to fill vacancies in the ensembles.

Promotional auditions are the auditions that current EYO members take to be considered for promotion into the upper-level ensembles of the EYO. These can be auditions for string section members to move from the String Sinfonia to the Youth Philharmonic Orchestra or from the Youth Philharmonic Orchestra to the Youth Symphony Orchestra, or for woodwind, brass and percussion members of the Youth Philharmonic Orchestra for vacancies in the Youth Symphony Orchestra. Promotional auditions are held annually in May and may be offered at other times during the year as well.

The EYO staff hears acceptance and promotional auditions. Students who successfully complete an acceptance audition are placed in an EYO ensemble in accordance with their performance level. Students who successfully complete a promotional audition are placed in the EYO ensemble for which they have auditioned for promotion. Once students have been accepted into an ensemble they do not have to audition annually for re-acceptance into that ensemble if they maintain their “Member in Good Standing” status. Students wishing to be promoted into an ensemble with a higher level of performance must complete a promotional audition during the regular audition times even if they are considered a “Member in Good Standing” of their current ensemble.

Member in Good Standing

EYO ensemble members are considered Members in Good Standing if they:

- are in attendance for all dress rehearsals and performances;
- maintain regular attendance for their ensemble’s rehearsals throughout the season;
- abide by the EYO’s Code of Conduct;
- exhibit good rehearsal etiquette; and
- demonstrate proper preparation of music for rehearsals and performances.

All EYO ensemble members who are considered Members in Good Standing at the completion of the season are guaranteed a spot in their respective ensemble for the following season.

Seating Auditions

At the beginning of each season the EYO will hold seating auditions to determine seating placement within the sections of the EYO ensembles. Seating auditions will consist of a prepared musical excerpt selected by the conductor of each ensemble; major scales; and sight reading. In addition, students in the Etowah Youth Symphony and Philharmonic Orchestras wishing to audition for an **uncontested principal chair** of their section will be required to prepare a solo excerpt of no more than three minutes along with the other audition requirements. Students who are awarded an uncontested principal chair may not be challenged for their chair during the season. PLEASE NOTE: the Etowah String Sinfonia does not have uncontested principal chairs, and there is not a Concertmaster audition for Sinfonia!

Students wishing to audition for the Concertmaster position in the Etowah Youth Symphony and Philharmonic Orchestras must complete all the above requirements, and additionally must have been a member of the violin section of the ensemble for which they are auditioning during the previous season. **Concertmasters must also be enrolled in private lessons with a qualified instructor and must provide verification of such enrollment for both the Fall and the Winter/Spring semesters.** In addition to the above audition requirements, students auditioning for the position of Concertmaster will have a five-minute interview segment as a part of their audition. Please note: the students who are awarded the Concertmaster chairs will be expected to be present at ALL published performances of the ensembles during the regular concert season. Students should review the schedule included with this handbook and confirm that they can be present for these performances before deciding to audition for this position.

Seating auditions are heard by outside, independent judges hired by the Etowah Youth Orchestras. The only exception will be for Concertmaster auditions, where the conductors of the respective ensembles will serve as a part of the judging panel. The seating audition judges will provide audition scores to the EYO staff, who will then tabulate and rank all students as per these scores. The EYO staff does maintain the right to review all results and has final discretion over seating placement. Once seating audition results have been posted the EYO staff will not review these results with individual students or parents for a “cooling-off” period of ten days. After this period students and parents may make appointments to discuss audition results with their ensemble’s conductor. The EYO will share judges’ comments with requesting students. Judges’ scores will not be made available.

Students are not required to take a seating audition. Students who do not take a seating audition will be placed at the back of their section in alphabetical order and will retain full membership privileges.

Students who are awarded principal chairs and other leadership positions in the EYO ensembles will be expected to maintain the highest standards of performance and demonstrate outstanding leadership throughout the season. A student who is not fulfilling the responsibilities of a leadership position may be removed from that position at the discretion of the ensemble conductor. Ensemble conductors will consult with any students in question, making them aware of any concerns before any action is taken.

Please remember that the purpose of seating auditions is to enable the EYO to present the best possible performing ensembles by maximizing each student’s specific talents and abilities. The staff of the EYO believes that all students are an integral and equal part of their ensemble and that ensemble members should not overvalue the seating audition process.

Along those lines, students and parents should also note that seatings for orchestras, especially regarding the violin sections, can function much differently than seatings for other musical ensembles. In considering the needs of the sections and the ensembles, violin seatings must consider both First and Second Violin sections, as well as outside versus inside stand seatings and leadership positions in BOTH sections. It is not always a situation of seating the players in the exact order in which they are ranked via their scores. Your EYO staff members have many years of experience in seating placement and are always working to ensure the best possible scenario for each section member, the sections as a whole, and the ensembles as a whole.

Reseating policy

During the course of the season, the focus of the EYO ensembles, their musicians and their conductors is on presenting the best possible performances. The ensemble conductors are constantly monitoring the musical progress of each individual student, as well as the ensembles as a whole. As such, the conductors of the EYO ensembles reserve the right to reseat ensemble members within their sections at any time during the course of the season, if they feel it is of benefit to both the individual students and to the ensemble as a whole.

Reseatings may be done by audition; by consultation and recommendation from private instructors; or in consultation with other EYO staff members. Prior to any reseating, the ensemble conductor will confer with individual students as necessary to address individual performance concerns.

Membership fees and forms

At the beginning of the season each EYO member will need to complete the Member Information Form, Photo Release Form, and Policy Acceptance Agreement. These forms may be found at the EYO Member/Parent Resources webpage. **Please note that this is a hidden, non-public page** – the link to this page will be shared via email, Remind.com, and the private Facebook groups.

The annual EYO Membership Fees of \$350 per student may be paid online via the Gadsden Cultural Arts Foundation's payment website, <https://secure.qgiv.com/for/mghcfca>. For families with multiple students residing in the same household, the annual Membership Fee is \$280.00 per student. If you wish to establish a payment plan, or make your dues payment in another manner, please contact the EYO Music Director. A tutorial video on making your dues payment online can be found on the EYO YouTube channel (please contact us for the link) or posted in the EYO private Facebook groups.

All membership forms and fee payments must be received no later than the day of the students' seating auditions. For students not taking a seating audition, these items are due by the first rehearsal of the season. Students who have not submitted these items in will NOT be allowed to participate in seating auditions and will be placed at the back of their section in alphabetical order.

Please note the following information regarding payments to the EYO:

- If you are applying for Financial Aid for your student's EYO Membership Fees your completed application must be on file at the Mary G. Hardin Center for Cultural Arts **by the date of seating auditions.** The EYO Staff will confirm the receipt of all Financial Aid Applications prior to the review of seating auditions and will make every effort to have decisions regarding these applications by the time seating audition results are announced.
- The EYO charges a fee of \$30 for any returned checks, along with any fees charged by the financial institutions.
- The EYO does not issue refunds for payments of membership fees, even in the event of a student's withdrawal from the program!
- The EYO does not keep cash on hand at The Music Center to make change. If you are paying with cash, please bring EXACT CHANGE!
- **ALL STUDENT ACCOUNTS MUST BE CURRENT IN ORDER FOR ENSEMBLE MEMBERS TO PARTICIPATE IN CONCERTS OR OTHER EYO EVENTS!**

Chair Challenges

At specific times throughout the season, which shall be determined by each ensemble's conductor, the EYO may offer chair challenges for its ensemble members. These challenges are designed to encourage all students' continuing growth and development as musicians by allowing the opportunity for the students to advance in their seating placement.

Challenge procedures and repertoire will be determined by each ensemble's conductor and will be published at the time of the challenge for the ensemble. Challenge repertoire will generally consist of either music from the students' folders or solo literature consistent with the level of ability of the ensemble and the individuals. Students who have been awarded an uncontested principal chair or the Concertmaster chair in the Etowah Youth Symphony and Philharmonic Orchestras through the seating audition process may not be challenged for the duration of the season.

The Red Brick Collective

The Red Brick Collective is the chamber music division of the Etowah Youth Orchestras. Each year the EYO has multiple chamber ensembles that perform at different functions and events throughout the state. Membership in the Red Brick Collective ensembles is determined by EYO ensemble conductors, is by invitation, and is based on the needs of the EYO program for designated performances throughout the season.

Ensembles of the Red Brick Collective work with EYO staff members and guest coaches. Ensembles meet as needed to prepare for requested performances, with scheduling being at the convenience of coaches and ensemble members.

Students invited to participate in the ensembles of the Red Brick Collective are expected to commit to ADDITIONAL rehearsals for their Red Brick ensemble that will allow for adequate performance preparation.

Rock & Roll Christmas Front Ensemble Auditions

The EYO's Rock & Roll Christmas performance features a "front ensemble" consisting of members of the Etowah Youth Symphony and Etowah Youth Philharmonic Orchestras. The front ensemble includes guitar, keyboards and piano, bass, drums, vocalists, and other solo instrumentalists such as saxophone and violin. Please consult your EYO calendar for information regarding audition dates for instrumentalists and vocalists. Auditions can be scheduled by contacting the EYO Music Director.

Audition requirements are as follows:

Vocalists – one selection of your choice WITH ACCOMPANIMENT (either pre-recorded or live). Please select something that best demonstrates your vocal ability. You will be singing with a microphone through the house sound system.

Guitarists and keyboardists – one or two selections that feature your playing as both a rhythm section player and as a soloist. Accompaniment is not required – however, you may opt to have an accompanying track or live accompaniment (if you are using live accompaniment you must notify us when you schedule your audition).

Bassists – one selection that features your proficiency as a player – accompaniment (either live or with a track) is preferred! Please see the note above for guitarists and keyboardists about live accompaniment.

Drummers – two selections that show two different types of grooves, performed as both a rhythm section player and as a soloist. No accompaniment is required.

Instrumental soloists – one selection WITH ACCOMPANIMENT featuring your work as a soloist AND as a rhythm section player.

Alabama All-State & All-Region Orchestra Festivals

The Alabama All-State and All-Region Orchestra Festivals are annual events that feature the top orchestral musicians from throughout the state of Alabama. The events each feature multiple orchestras, both string and full, and are by audition. The 2024 Alabama All-State Orchestra Festival will be held February 8-11. The 2024 Alabama North All-Region Orchestra Festival will be held January 5-7. Information about the festivals can be found at the website of the Alabama Orchestra Association, www.alabamaorchestraassociation.org.

Auditions for the festivals will be held in the fall of 2023. Official audition dates will be announced in correlation with information provided by the Alabama Orchestra Association, EAST CENTRAL DISTRICT. String players will select which orchestra/orchestras they wish to audition for. Woodwind, brass, and percussion players have one set of audition materials that covers all orchestras.

The EYO will cover the cost of the audition registration fee for all EYO members and will also cover the cost of the **registration fee** for all members accepted into the festivals. **Please note – the EYO does not cover travel, meals, or accommodations for selected participants!**

If you wish to audition or review the audition materials, please contact the EYO Music Director for assistance with obtaining audition excerpts or scheduling your audition time. **All audition times MUST be scheduled through the AOA website for students to be considered for an audition and for registration fees to be paid! Before registering for an audition, please consult with the EYO Music Director or refer to the handouts provide by the EYO staff for the proper procedures!**

Please note: the EYO staff is unable to sponsor woodwind, brass and percussion students for Alabama All-State Band, District Honor Band, Solo & Ensemble Contest, or college/university honor band events. These sponsorships must be provided by the student's SCHOOL BAND DIRECTOR!

GCAF Financial Aid Program – The Fund for Access

The EYO partners with the Gadsden Community School for the Arts and the Downtown Dance Conservatory with a universal Financial Aid Application. The Gadsden Cultural Arts Foundation's Fund for Access aids students enrolled in any of these programs, including:

- Reduction or waiver of annual EYO membership fees
- Private lesson scholarships with instructors from the Gadsden Community School for the Arts
- Low-cost/no-cost instrument rental for participation in EYO programs
- The Bob Kintz, Sr. Memorial Scholarship for concert attire rental
- Other scholarship and financial aid opportunities as announced throughout the season.

To apply for Financial Aid please complete the 2023-2024 Application for Fund for Access, **AS WELL AS** the Fund for Access EYO Addendum. Both documents can be obtained at <https://culturalarts.com/gca-art-class-enrollment/>, or by contacting the EYO Offices.

PLEASE NOTE THAT ALL FINANCIAL AID APPLICATIONS ARE DUE BY 5 PM ON AUGUST 15, AND MUST BE SUBMITTED TO SUSIE COLLINS AT THE GADSDEN CULTURAL ARTS FOUNDATION – NOT TO THE EYO OFFICES! Please contact the EYO Staff if you have any questions regarding this application process!

EYO Button Day

Button Day is the EYO's only major fundraiser of the year that requires mandatory participation from students or family members. The EYO partners with various organizations and businesses in Etowah County (Johnson's Giant Foods, Gregerson's Foods, The Coffee Bar, Gadsden Variety and others) to have a single day each year where the community can show their support for the EYO program.

EYO members and parents are present at different locations throughout the community distributing "I ♥ EYO" buttons and collecting donations. Through saturating the area on a single day, the EYO can have a large-scale fundraiser without over-extending volunteers.

Each EYO family is required to work at least one shift for Button Day **FOR EACH STUDENT WHO IS A PART OF AN EYO ENSEMBLE**. EYO ensemble members may represent themselves or may be represented by a parent or another family member. **EACH EYO MEMBER MUST BE REPRESENTED FOR AT LEAST ONE SHIFT!**

Families wishing not to participate in Button Day may “buy out” their shift at the cost of \$100 PER STUDENT MEMBER.

The 2023 EYO Button Day will be held on Saturday, November 18 from 8 AM-2 PM. Sign-up for Button Day will begin on October 1 and will be done via email. Please watch your email, Facebook, and Remind.com for more information.